

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8609

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR EIND CS

SUBJECT: RECENT CHANGES IN MC ALPIN'S CHAPENAL RANCH

REF: STATE 236327

1. GOCR'S PUBLIC REGISTER DOES NOT SHOW A RECENT TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF HACIENDA CHAPENAL. THE LAST RECORDED TRANS-ACTION WAS MADE JULY 27, 1972 WHEN THE TITLE WAS TRANSFERRED FROM THE THREE BORBON CASTROL BROTHERS TO PROGRESO COMERCIAL Y AGRICOLA S.A.

2. PROGRESO COMERCIAL IS NOT RECORDED PER SE IN THE PUBLIC REGISTER, ALTHOUGH AS A FUNCTIONING COMPANY IN COSTA RICA IT SHOULD BE. AN OFFICIAL OF THE PUBLIC REGISTRY OFFICE SAYS THAT ITS NON APPEARANCE IS DUE TO AN ERROR. A FURTHER CHECK REVEALED THAT A LOCAL FIRM CIENPIES S.A. WAS REGISTERED JUNE 8 1972 AND ON JULY 27, 1972 (THE SAME DAY OF THE LAST RECORDED TRANSFER OF CHAPENAL) CHANGED ITS NAME TO PROGRESO COMERCIAL Y AGRICOLA S.A. ALTHOUGH MCALPIN WAS NOT INCLUDED AMONG THE OFFICERS LISTED FOR EITHER FIRM, THOSE WHO WERE LISTED ARE KNOWN TO BE HIS ASSOCIATES. ONE OF THEM, CARLOS VARGAS GENE, IS ALSO LISTED AS OWNER OF HACIENDA SAN CRISTOBAL, MCALPIN'S RANCH IN THE SAN CARLOS VALLEY.

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3. PUBLIC LAND REGISTER LISTINGS FOR 15 FARMS SHOW PROGRESO

COHERICAL Y AGRICOLA S.A. AS OWNER. FIVE OF THESE FARMS ARE PARTS OF CHAPENAL AND THE OTHER TEN ARE ADJACENT TO OR NEAR CHAPENAL. THE REGISTER ALSO REFLECTS A CHANGE IN CHAPENAL'S MANAGEMENT. ON JANUARY 16, 1974, CARLOS VARGAS GENE WAS NAMED AS ITS MANAGER REPLACING RUCKLI VON CANSTEL, ANOTHER CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MCALPIN.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN AWARE THAT MCALPIN HAS BEEN MOVING CATTLE FROM CHAPENAL (WHICH LOCAL SOURCES CONSIDER TO BE FINANCED BY CAPITAL GROWTH FUND) TO SAN CRISTOBAL, WHICH IS CONSIDERED BY LOCALS TO BE HIS PERSONAL FARM. THE CATTLE WERE PART OF A 1,200 HEAD IMPORTATION OF PURE BLOOD CHAROLAIS AND RUMOR HAS IT THAT ONLY 800 OF THESE ANIMALS REMAIN, THE REST HAVING DIED. A VERY RELIABLE SOURCE SAYS THAT 2,500 MANZANAS OF CHAPENAL WERE SOLD DURING THE PAST WEEKS TO AGRICOLA EL PALMAR S.A., A MAJOR SUGAR MILL, FOR COLONES 25 MILLION. THE SAME SOURCE SAYS THAT HE IS BIDDING ON THE 4,000 MANZANAS REMAINING OF CHAPENAL, BUT THIS BEING HILLY UPLAND ONLY SUITED FOR CATTLE, HE CAN NOT PAY THE UNIT PRICE PAID FOR THE 2,500 MANZANAS WHICH WILL GO INTO SUGAR CANE. OTHER SOURCES INDICATE THAT THE PALMAR PAYMENTS MAY BE SPREAD OVER A VERY LONG TIME PERIOD.

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